

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

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INFO SECDEF WASHDC

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AMEMBASSY BONN

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S E C R E T ROME 8591

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, NATO, FR

SUBJECT: FRANCE AND EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION

1. IN WIDE-RANGING AUGUST 23 CONVERSATION ON VARIOUS EUROPEAN DEFENSE ISSUES, BRIG. GENERAL SANTINI (CHIEF OF NATO OFFICE IN MOD) TOLD EMBOFF THAT ITALIANS WERE BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONVINCED THAT FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS ENGAGING IN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS ON BROAD MILITARY ISSUES CONFRONTING EUROPE WAS UNDERGOING A CHANGE. SANTINI SAID THAT HERETOFORE FRANCE HAD FLATLY REFUSED TO DISCUSS SUCH ISSUES IN BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS, BUT, IN CONNECTION WITH UPCOMING BILATERAL MILITARY TALKS (SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER), THE FRENCH HAVE AGREED TO INCLUDE EUROPEAN-WIDE DEFENSE ISSUES ON THE AGENDA FOR THE FIRST TIME. SANTINI SURMISED THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED WOULD BE THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN A MULTILATERAL EUROPEAN FORUM

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CONCERNED WITH THIS SUBJECT.

2. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION AS TO THE CURRENT STATUS OF EARLIER REPORTS THAT THE ARMAMENTS COMMITTEE OF THE WEU MIGHT SERVE SUCH A PURPOSE, SANTINI RESPONDED THAT THE IDEA IS VERY MUCH ALIVE. HE REMARKED THAT THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE IS THE DIS-CRIMINATORY LANGUAGE OF THE BRUSSELS TREATY TOWARDS GERMANY. WAYS MUST BE FOUND, HE SAID, TO GET AROUND THE LANGUAGE OF THE TREATY CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED GERMAN AGGRESSION SO AS TO PERMIT FRG PARTICIPATION.

3. SANTINI ADMITTED THAT FRANCE'S MOTIVATION WAS STILL TO BE TESTED, I.E., TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE ALLEGED RENEWED FRENCH INTEREST IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION BEEN ENGENDERED BY FEAR OF BEING ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE EUROGROUP'S ACTIVITY IN THE ARMS PROCUREMENT FIELD. BUT, SANTINI MAINTAINED, THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE FRENCH SUBSTANTIVELY INVOLVED WARRANTED EXHAUSTING ALL POSSIBILITIES WHICH OFFER THE HOPE OF ENTICING THE FRENCH INTO A MULTILATERAL DEFENSE FORUM. (COMMENT: AS HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN REPORTED, THE "CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE" REFERRED TO BY SANTINI REFLECTS THE DEEPLY FELT ITALIAN VIEW THAT THE EUROPEANS MUST START NOW DOWN THE ROAD TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE UNITY AND, WITHOUT FRANCE, THIS IS A CHIMERA. UNDERLYING ALL OF THIS, OF COURSE, IS THE BELIEF THAT THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE CANNOT BE COUNTED ON FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. IN THEIR ABSENCE, THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO A EUROPE UNIFIED POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND MILITARILY IS, IN ITALIAN EYES, "FINLANDIZATION" FOR THOSE EUROPEAN STATES SUCH AS ITALY WHERE THERE ARE PRONOUNCED LEFTIST TENDENCIES IN THE BODY POLITIC.)

4. ULTIMATELY, SANTINI FORESAW THE ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE AS CONSTITUTING AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF "EUROPEAN" DEFENSE CAPABILITY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN SUCH A FORCE WOULD REQUIRE THAT THE BRITISH AND THE FRENCH RETAIN THE "KEY" AND THAT IT WOULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE GERMANS WOULD COME AROUND TO ACCEPT FULLY SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. BUT, HE REITERATED, THIS SEEMED AT THIS JUNCTURE THE ONLY WAY TO GO AND HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE U.S. WOULD EVENTUALLY SUPPORT NOT ONLY THE ABSTRACT CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE UNITY BUT ALSO THE CREATION OF AN INTEGRATED SECRET

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ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE. VOLPE

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